

## CLAIMS

What we claim is:

1        1. An instant messaging communication system that enables a user to obtain  
2        instant messaging at destination devices other than the user's normal terminals, said  
3        system comprising

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5        a presence processor,

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7        a messenger client connected to said presence processor, and

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9        a unified instant messaging processor communicating with said presence  
10       processor and with said user terminals, said unified instant message processor  
11       including

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13       means for storing user defined terminal selections and for storing user  
14       preferences, and

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16       a further processor connected to said storing means and comprising  
17       state reporting means for receiving from said unified instant message processor  
18       information as to the user defined local presence states and means for formatting  
19       and routing data in communication with said presence processor.  
20

21       2. A system in accordance with claim 1 wherein said means for formatting and  
22       routing data comprises means for formatting and routing message data and means for  
23       formatting and routing presence data.  
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25 3. A system in accordance with claim 2 wherein said unified messaging processor  
26 further comprises a protocol interface between said further processor and said  
27 presence processor.

28  
29 4. A system in accordance with claim 2 wherein communication between said  
30 unified messaging processor and said presence processor, between said messenger  
31 client and said presence processor, and between said user terminals and said unified  
32 instant messaging processor is via the internet.

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34 5. An instant messaging communication system in accordance with claim 1  
35 wherein said unified instant messaging processor is a central server for a plurality of  
36 users, each of said plurality of users having a plurality of different terminals.

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38 6. A method for enabling instant messaging with a user at different locations for  
39 that user, said method including the steps of

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41 transmitting data from a presence processor to a unified instant message  
42 processor,

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44 at said unified instant message processor determining whether said data  
45 concerns a presence or a message,

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47 based upon said determining step checking with prior stored information as to  
48 whether said data should be forwarded,

49  
50 if said data is to be forwarded, checking prior stored information as to the local  
51 presence state for said data; and

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53 formatting and routing said data to the intended terminal, as determined from  
54 said local presence state for said data.

- 55        7. The method in accordance with claim 6 further enabling a user to reply to a  
56        forwarded instant message and wherein said formatting and routing step comprises  
57        including within the forwarded message a specific return address including correlation  
58        information, and said method further comprising the steps of  
59                monitoring said return address for a reply from the user terminal,  
60                accepting the reply from a user terminal, correlating the reply with a proper  
61        instant messaging session, and translating the reply into a format acceptable to the  
62        presence processor, and  
63                delivering the reply to the proper instant messaging session on the presence  
64        processor.
- 65        8. The method in accordance with claim 7 wherein communication between the  
66        unified instant message processor and a user terminal is via email.
- 67        9. The method in accordance with claim 8 wherein said unified instant message  
68        processor runs a Simple Mail Transport Protocol process and creates dynamic email  
69        addresses to do correlation.
- 70        10. The method in accordance with claim 6 further comprising the step of  
71        registering with the presence processor on behalf of a user.
- 72        11. The method in accordance with claim 10 wherein said registering step  
73        comprises the steps of  
74                the unified instant message processor prompting the user for a local state,  
75                the unified instant message processor reporting the user global state to the  
76        presence processor, and  
77                the presence processor delivering to the unified instant messaging processor  
78        status information for buddies of the user.